"My Hands Don't Sleep"
By Nudge Squidfish
2002

"Hello?" "Yes... I would like to speak with Jim Shepard." (Click!) "Hello?" (Ring. Ring. Ring) "Hello?" "Is this Jim Shepard?" (Click!!) "Hello?" "FUCK!" (Ring. Ring. Ring) "Hello?" "I read this article in Focus magazine about this guy named Jim Shepard. I would like to talk to him about his record Slit & Pre-Slit"? "OH...? I thought you were a bill collector," said the dark brooding voice. And so, an incredible relationship was launched. One filled with insane & hilarious twists and turns. The year was 1977 and top 40 radio held American culture in a death grip. Disco was king and MTV was just a gleam in Punk Rock's eye. Yet, for songwriter types like Jim & I Teac's 4-track overdub cassette recorder along with VCRs had just open magical door. The music industry was beginning to change. Listener burnout, technology & disco had the "majors" blaming home taping for a slump in music sales. At that time folks had no idea of the powerful genius that was on the other end of the line. Nor, would the music industry with its' cookie cutter mentality suspect his sonic genius until long after his death. Yet, we knew from the start that you don't have to get rich and famous to make it; you didn't need big production & marketing budgets, you could do it on your own, you just needed to love the music. For us, that's what it all came down to.

Just like the early legends of bluegrass, country & blues we struggle for existence. We were trailblazers. We went dumpster diving for the resources in the halls of culture. This was the only way we could make the sonic music we loved. To me, looking back,

Jimbo always seemed so aloof & sarcastic; almost as if his thoughts were a giant calculator in the clouds. Yet, there was this very strange and magical force pushing us; pushing us forwards with our sonic hammers. This divine intelligence guided us through the drugs & press reviews. All we had to do was act.

I guess it was about exploring? The flower of youth was our ally. We were the "new circus" as opposed to the worn-out, corrupt, & boring prefabricated disco. Top 40 made us sick & we hated it. After all, someone had to point the way back to non-capitalistic rock n' roll? Isn't that were all truly great music comes from? Our generations of peers were the first of "Do It Yourself-ERs". We danced as the Sex Pistols had kicked down the door. They had made a joke of the disco industry. Yet, we took it one more step. We rejected the notion of making a living off the art. We would prove that low-budget music could be of a higher quality, that our noise was better than that top 40 disco crap! But we had to pay the price for this philosophy. We had to rise above our hypocrisy. It was a rather high price too! The time had arrived. And so, like a cancer the black plague began spreading. 30 years later I watch from my central cocoon as the Internet is pushing the music industy towards our non-profit business model. Back then it was just "our dream". Today is it becoming the norm. This then is my personal tale. It is the story of Jim Shepard & Nudge Squidfish's sonic journey. Let us begin.

It would be a year later in July 1978 that Jimbo & I would actually meet. Since 1974 I had been working for the City of Columbus Ohio, struggling to keep my family together and sneaking in some rock n' roll when possible. My home life was oppressive due to my rich & condescending in-laws. Their capitalistic outlook had no tolerance for a creative dysfunctional. Under constant attack I grew so insecure that I would pull my toes nails out. I was afraid to let anyone see my bloody feet, let alone touch my body or give me hugs. I was totally ashamed. I could not defend myself to my in-laws. Eventually my insecurities began to smother my wife emotionally and we divorced.

I had arrived at this situation from a very turbulent childhood. My dad's health forced him to abandon my sister & me for Florida where he ups & dies shortly upon arrival. My poor mother then

totally flips out & is checked into the "nut house" for 2 years of shock treatments. Next thing I know is that I get polio & almost die. I'm not sure but I think I was the first "Easter Seals Kid" for Ruth Lyons 50/50 club out of Cincinnati? After I get out of the Children's Hospital I go to live with my mom because my 75-year-old grandmother was weak & tired. From 1952 till 1974 rock n' roll was the only constant in my life. Rock & Roll kept me out of a lot of trouble. I grew up on a farm near Johnstown Ohio listening to 50's rock n' roll. It was the golden years of rock n' roll radio. I would spend hours out in the fields humming songs all day long. By age 13, I started playing in a band. By the 6th grade I was jamming on Beatles & Rolling Stones songs. It was during this periods that I learned that I would have to do it all by myself. Most of the kids in school weren't as serious as I was about music.

I had met Tommy Jay in early 1978 while working for the City of Columbus Ohio. One day this guy in horribly wrinkled garments & humorous wit introduces himself, "Do you have any aspirin?" Tommy has always been very a funny sociable scoundrel. His wit is a precious jewel. After awhile he proceeds to ask me to keep a lookout for our boss while he goes to get some sleep in the stockroom??? That way no one could catch him & Jones could get 3 or 4 hour in before the next all nighter with Mike Rep. Sometime we go and have a smoke too! whoopee! But it got really bad after our boss gave us the keys to the motor pool. Then we figured out we could go to the movies and have some real fun. Tommy was & will always be a party monster. His ass use to drag to work after an all-nighter and beg me to lock him in. "SQUID, I'M IN REAL BAD SHAPE. CAN YOU LOCK ME IN?"

Most mornings Tommy would go out to the workhouse and get a detail of prisoners to help me in the print shop. Back then the print shop was the happen place to be. Something was always brewing. One time a prisoner steals the keys to a city car and books to Cincinnati, but, being a Rhodes Scholar, gets busted because the car has a giant logo on it. Stupid! Another time of insanity was when I was talking with our boss and two joints fall out on the floor. I just bend over and play it off like I've been rolling my own cigarettes. In late 1978 Tommy and I recorded our 1st song together, which he wrote, called "Cobra Breath". He began to tell me about his band; which he called "THE TRUE BELIEVERS". I

learned all about the "punk movement" from Tom. I didn't know what to think; so, I go out to Grove City Ohio to hear them. When I get there I park my car on the street and walk to the house. As I near I spy Tommy's mother "Ruth" diligently exercising her "free speech" rights upon the cops whom had come to complain about the music. After the poor bastards make their strategic withdraw I inform her that I'm a friend of Tom's and she points to a side entrance door.

I stop and look up at the two-story structure and find the whole upstairs complex has smoke seeping out the window crack. Then the smell hits-pot! They were rehearing so I had a 15-minute wait before Tommy Jay pops his head out to see if it was the law again? The door flies open and I try to walk up the stairs which are so steep & lopsided I have to hug the wall to traverse the journey. As I passed two huge industrial strength trashcans overflowing with spent beer cans I enter the blacklight coffeehouse enclave, which burst into a misty pot haze. The walls are covered with posters.

Tommy introduces me to Mike Rep & The General Robert E. Lee. Mike had a thick bushy black mustache that almost seemed to leap off his upper lip and pinch your wallet as he spoke. I could tell he was one witty sarcastic hit right away. The nervous energy made him tremble when he played but he focused it so sharply you could feel the razor slice our soul. On the other hand, The General looked like a hell angel outcast with his sardonic wit and beady Ted Bundy eyes. I was afraid he would set off a hand grenade at any moment. How did this guy gets out of prison I thought? And then there was giant Afro headed Tommy Jay. Tommy's sunglasses hid his blood shot eyes. They all were in garrulous gargoyle mode.

Taken all together they were the most chenopodian bunch of misfits I had ever ran across. I asked them to play some of there songs and it was like turning the light on in a filthy kitchen and watching the roaches scurry for cover. They plug in and the next thing I know shit is falling off the walls and beer cans are dancing on the floor. Mike started the rampage then he shifted gears and eased into a power glide. When the music stopped the General and Rep began to slug it out over what was to come next. Tommy Jay suggest something and POW! I was shocked shitless: the power, the

delivery, this ain't no disco I thought! Light the fires and kick the tires mcdaddy, The True Believers were in the fucking house!

A few months later Rep, Jay & The General stopped out to my house in Bexley Ohio and ask me if I would join? Are snake's asses close to the ground? Hell yes! When I agreed my wife when off about the money but Tommy Jay assured her the band had tremendous commercial potential. (Fucking Liar!) In early 1979 Mike Rep moved in with a girl he met at the Post Office. So we set up shop rehearsing in her Victorian Village flat. Word spread and soon other reptiles like Jim Shepard, Ron House, Chuck Kubat, Ted & Carla Lust, Freight Train & Chris the Anarchist where hanging out, smoking dope & chugging beers. The basement had a dirt floor so we got shocked a lot from the ungrounded amps. One day Mike & me were talking about Jim Shepard's music and he gives me a copy of "Slit & Pre-Slit" along with his record "Rocket To No Where". I took them home and was mystified over what I was hearing? Their Lo-Fi music philosophy seemed to fit right in with my notions. Yet, the records cut across the grain of everything I had learned. I was conflicted to say the least but I had also been experimenting along the same lines so it was no wonder I could connect the way I did. Yet, at this point I was not on the same songwriting level with them. That only happened when I move to Nashville.

Things began to accelerate with the announcement of a show at a bar on the West Side called "Wayne's Place". In 1978 there just wasn't any places to play. The public had not even heard of the punk movement. Bars only would accept bands that would play top 40 radio. That summer we sweated away in the damp & wet dirt basement polishing our licks for the big show. This was our chance to establish a toehold for the Columbus Ohio punk movement. Mike Rep got Jim Shepard & Charlie Miller to photograph & record our show for us. In the weeks leading up to the show Jim & I drew closer. For some magical reason we just seem to click. I soon found out that he could out think me at every move. This trend was to last for the rest of our lives. I was always light years behind the old sod. His band Vertical Slit had a new record called "Art Data Sampler". I had heard about Shepard & Roxanne's baby being hit in the head with a horseshoe-boom!! Gabe had almost died. As Jimbo raped on about his situation I felt connected to his family. Jim & I shared a

bond of interests; hospitals, problems with women, and especially music & art history. We both were by nature simply curious about things.

That night we poured our hearts out for rock & roll. Even the bartender, though vastly perplex, was appreciative of the emotional shock wave blasting from the stage. Between sets Jimbo posed us at the pool table and clicked classic True Believers shots. He brooded & paced looking for the best elements to stage. Jim was taking pride in our success that night. I began to notice his visual tasted was always skewed towards sensualism. This was achieved by marrying 'paper mache', dada, and spontaneity into his method. We were from his tribe and in a hostile land spreading a new musical ethic. We were kicking down the walls and everyone there knew it. After the show Zero Watts came strolling up to shake my hand. Rep had told me that he played in the first punk band in Columbus, Ohio called The Blades.

That week I met Ron House at Tommy Jay's new apartment on Blake Avenue. Ron had just started working at the record store owned by a mad hatter called Chuck Kubat. When I heard Ron sing for the first time I felt awful sorry for him because he really wanted to play rock & roll & I figured the poor bastard didn't have a chance? Nobody was going to pay cash to hear that tone-deaf rooster sing. Fuck me, what did I know? I bet Jad Fair of Half-Japanese wishes he could write as well as Ron House! Mike had to find a new place for us to rehearse due to the fact that the Victorian Village babe had totally given "her life to our lord & Savior Jesus Christ"!

So fate pushed the True Believers from the warm Christian comforts of the born again babe to take up residence in the record store basement where Ron & Rep worked. Quite often Jimbo would come around and bum records from Mike & check on our progress as a unit. Some times Ted, Carla, Ron, Chris the Anarchist, & Freight Train would jam with the band. One day in the summer of 1979 Mike Rock of the Screaming Urge ask us to play the Nowhere Show that fall. I had kind of got to know him because Chuck Kubat started putting on shows in the record store with bands like the Screaming Urge, The Worst, Highly Evolved Cosmic Beings, & Vertical Slit. A growing cast of local artists surrounded us. Chris

the Anarchist had become our M.C., confidant & drug supplier. Later he introduced me to the roommates at the Dyke House. There I made friends with Arlus, Bob Kat, Dave Manic, Greg Casey & Lynn Whitacker. As I started to spend more & more time with Jimbo I began to see how much we were alike and that scared me. We both kept negative things in and were loners even to our closest relationships. We both had good hearts & were very competitive. We were deeply emotional & sensitive but didn't share it with others. We began to be obsessive about become rich & famous as rock stars; do big gigs and record in big studios. We believed the hype & mistook bullshit for truth.

The night of the big gig Jimbo & Vertical Slit put on one truly amazing show at the Northwood Community Center. Jim would pace back & forth in this manic homicide frenzy. Jim never stopped pacing whenever he was on stage. It was his trademark. There was this sarcastic angry energy bottled up inside. If he didn't pace he would explode! After the show I went outside & smoked a joint with Jim. I hadn't expected that much intensity. Jimbo was from a different planet. We talked about the show and how all the bands sounded then I headed home to my family.

Jim began to teach me about spontaneity and I showed him how to think in terms of order. To the day of his death our relationship was founded on this, but at the end of his life we would switch these roles. I became him, he became me. The world saw us as a tag-team. We were much more than that. We were evil twins with a plan.

I was still living in Reynoldsburg Ohio in December of 1979 when both our worlds started to collapse. Carla had joined the True Believers and Vertical Slit was breaking up. We were booked to do the Anti-Ronald Regan Ball and every thing in my life was falling apart. I had been spending time over at Shepard's Hudson Avenue apartment and got to know Roxanne Newman. During this period she had a heart of gold but a terrible temper. They met while she had been working & Jim had been impressed. He began to frequent her shows and soon a flowery romance bloomed in season. Needless to say that the happy pair took to parenthood like a duck to water. Of course Jim's dad advised him not to legalize the

relationship and years later Roxanne would rally against the inescapable inequity of their status.

Jim had this giant homemade stereo center crammed with about 150 records & tapes. It always felt like I was at the altar of some church. It was his god. It reminded me of a book full of many cultural chapters on modern music. I never got to really go through it due to the fact that Gabe had so many toys on the floor that you couldn't even walk. However, if a party was scheduled the house would become spotless and one could gain access to Jim's ear. Jim & Roxanne would dote over the Gabe and refuse to punish any breach of the rules. It seems to me that Gabe was their pride & joy and they filled the house with love around him. Also, the dog could do no wrong too. Jim & Roxanne spoiled them both. It was almost a crime to mention anything about the lack of parental discipline. Yet, Underneath it all Gabe was a good-hearted loving kid. Like most kids his age he had tons of energy to burn. When I first met Gabe he was in a crash helmet due to the fact that he got hit in the head by a horseshoe. Whenever Roxanne talked about it she got very nervous. Hey, kids are kids and shit does happen to them.

Between 1980 till 1983 I began to shoot 8-mm film. Consumer camcorders hadn't been invented yet. I had taken up painting and film seems to be a very easy way in which to document my life. Most of my friends thought it was bullshit to be shooting them but Jim & I always did have a strong sense of history. We knew that one day the rest of the world would want a peek into our world. That is what we wanted to do with our heroes? Jim turned me on to Alfred Jarry's play Pere Ubu & we started to study Man Ray & Duchamp together. They were sort of a role model for us. Jim started playing me what he thought what the best of the new music coming out- Eno, Joy Division, Siouxsie and the Banshees, Kate Bush, Pere Ubu, U-2. Jim was drifting into the cowtown writers' scene. His music was on hold due to a lack of funds. Seeing how he didn't have any money writing was a very cheap outlet artistically for him. Now stream-of-consciousness was a good place to start. It is great for brainstorming but afterwards it needs to be subjected to taste. On this point Jimbo always let me apply my rational method. During our tabletop recording years we would start with a stream-of – consciousness idea then I would take that notion and filter it through logic & taste as defined by personal experience.

What we were both after in those days was “Weird Pop Songs”. Songs that pull in & push away the listener’s pleasure. The only problem was that at the time I couldn’t write & Jimbo could. Also, we were using very cheap mono tape deck back then so the quality was very poor. Boy did the three of us have some fun! But mostly it was Jim & I just messing around. All throughout the 70’s I kept trying to figure out how to “write weird pop songs” but it wasn’t till I moved to Nashville and went to song writing classes at Belmont College that I mastered it.

In January of 1980 the curtain was coming down. We did our last True Believers show at the Northwood Community Center. That night Eric Moore & the Godz open up their rehearsal space behind the stage and watched us do our thing. Eric Moore didn't know what to think of us punk rocks. But he did watch our every move. Once again Jimbo shot photos of this last gig. We were at our peek and blasted away at the crowd. That was one of the best shows of my life. It was like being with Lewis & Clark expedition and experiencing the wilderness for the first time. There is an 8mm film of the show but it does not have a sound track.

A few weeks later Jim brought Kurt Tuckerman out to see my closet studio in Reynoldsburg Ohio. My wife didn't really like it. To her my music was just a big waste of time, besides there was no money in it? She just didn't understand me. They were planning to start a new band called “Phantom Limb”. Jim ask me to do the printing and layout for his new Vertical Silt 45 which Kurt had recorded at Mr. Brown’s before the Vertical Slit broke up. They were thinking about putting a band together. We worked very hard on that project. Jim and I would bounce drafts back and forth until we got to what we both wanted. Jim liked to employ George Brock’s paper mache techniques in developing his artwork. He would shop books & magazines for artwork. If he saw something he like he would cut it out and the return the unsold product to the rack. I use to come across a ton of books with missing pages at the library. I made sure I didn’t check out any of them out!

To make ends meet Roxanne & Jim would take odd jobs. Once while working at a club a bandit made the “sad mistake” of holding up Miss Roxy! He would be better off holding up the John Rambo! Surprise! Surprise! Surprise Sargent Carter! As he was running away Miss Roxy emptied some "hot lead" into his ass in the parking lot! The cops were impressed!

Now relationships are never easy to deal with even in the best of financial circumstances. To keep the balance between give & take both parties must be willing to share in the sacrifice of wants & desires. Relationships are like jobs. You have to work them 24/7 and most of the time there is very little pay off. Trying to raise a kid on very little income is the quickest way I know of for trouble to brew. Soon, mostly out of financial stress Roxanne began to "yell" at Jim if she didn’t get her way. Often she would yell at him in front of his friends & family. Failing that, she would threaten to leave him if he didn’t give in to her. Actually, a few times she did split with the kids but after a few weeks with her mother financial circumstances would be forced her back.

Also, neither was willing to come to terms with their relationship status. No doubt the in-laws didn't help with their 2 cents worth of opinions. Instead of going into counseling they both tried to cope with the bullshit. I use to tease Jimbo by singing Buck Owens “I’ve got a tiger by the tail” to him after one of their battles. It was no wonder that they were always at each other over money. Neither of them was working steady jobs at this time. Yet, they were trying to raise a kid? Add to this trouble the fact that they both were very attractive people. In the end, financial circumstances forced Jim to call his dad from time to time and ask for money. Like Jim, I too had

the same problem of trying to keep my family together, except I didn’t understand it at the time.

In 1981 my marriage broke up & I moved in with my sister. Jimbo & I were both hanging on by a tread financially. On that score, Jim was much better at it. Neither of us was getting anywhere with the music, which would have taken a lot of the pressure off. After staying with my sister and sleeping underneath a pool table for a few months I moved into the dyke house. The dyke house was an art gettho. When I moved in the Blunt Stitches were on the point of breaking up & Ron House was trying to put a band together, which later turned into Great Plains. I would get drunk on weekends and go to Crazy Moma’s and check out the bands. There was always a party going on. The Screaming Urge also used the dyke house to rehearse. All in all I didn’t get much sleep while I was living there.

Jim would come over to the dyke house and we would talk about music. We would go on for hours about art and music, which led us to research history. We were excited about Tet Offence Fanizine, which followed the local music scene. I gave him my paper on Object Music and the next thing I know everybody is experimenting. I am not sure if my paper had anything to do with it but it felt good? During one of our talks Jimbo reveled his plans for a book to be called "Drapez". Not being able to record music he figure he could still create by way of painting & writing which he pursued with rigor. He patterned the book after Philip K. Dick's "blade runner". It ended up becoming a 7-year project for him.

Soon Jim had enough cash coming in to make a go at a band again. Phantom Limb was a cash drain but to them it was a necessary cash drain. It kept things in balance for Jim. Food and bills were still a major problem. Jimbo began to work construction or odd jobs; anything to make ends meet. When it came to his family Jimbo would do what ever it took to survive, even if it meant putting off his art. One time I was in the store and he stole some steaks for dinner. I was so shocked that I gave him $20 bucks to help out. Things were going from bad to worst for me also. I had sold my recording studio to Tommy Jay to finance my first object music 45 called “Wedding Vows”. It was a tribute to my x-wife for many years of faithful service. After the True Believers broke up Mike Rep started New Age Records. Everyone was messing around with

objects trying to make pop songs but it seemed to me that only Tommy & I had gotten close to it. By this time Phantom Limb was doing shows at Mr. Browns' Descent. I went to most of their shows and they were great art rock band. The press was high on them and Jim & Roxanne were on top of the world musically.

Chapter -2-
"Wedding Vows"

The winter of 1981 saw me still working for the city of Columbus & living at the dyke house. We would have parties on the weekends and I was making 8mm film of the people who were hanging out. (Ron House, Chris the Anarchist, David Kulczyk, Dave Green, Max Flash, Mike Rock, Bob Kat, Greg Casey, Lynn Cart, & Arlus Stitch) There was this old woman upstairs named Cora and every night she would get drunk. I would see her legless stumbling toward the toilet. Often I would help her. She was a sweet old bag and must have been about 70 but she had the spirit of a sailor. There was this great big hole in the roof over the shower and I could see the stars. Snow would fall and form a drift as I got ready for work. Most days you could see your breath. Chuck Kubat had turn the heat off and the water would freeze up. I had one room with a space heater so I was able to do some art there. One day I got up and there is this trail of shit leading into the bathroom. Inside, shit was every where; the walls, seat & shower stall. I was paying $200 a month so I call Chuck and the next thing I know he evicts her in the middle of winter. At the time I felt bad but it turned out to be the best thing for Cora. The state took good care of her. Another time I was using the down stairs toilet and found that it wouldn’t flush? So I open it up and the tank is filled with 3 bricks of pot! I found out later that Chris the Anarchist had been using it as a safe. Later, Chris told me that he would spray his pot with sugar water so it would compress up better for transportation.

That same week Jim had called me at work and asks if I would meet him? When I got there he was really upset. Something had happen. He wouldn't tell me what happen but he said he was going to leave Roxanne. I pointed out that the only one who would lose was Gabe. "Do you really want to end up like me?" I ask? I talked him down. I told him he should try to hold it together. Wrong! What I should

have told him was to go to a marriage counselor. Yet, I doubt that either of them would have gone for that at the time. This pattern of thinking things out for him grew as we got older. Sometimes Jim would blast his negativity about things at me in the form of biting sarcasm. I was helpless in the face of one of his attacks and he later always deeply regretted it and made it up to me. Jim method of attack was horrible. Jim would get contemptuous of your self worth and sarcastically put your down as a stupid. He hammered me a few times. At the root of their problems was “money”. I always tried to stay out of their business. I didn’t like to be in the middle of it. Yet, He would use the same negatively to feed his muse? My mom told me it was Roxanne’s nerves. She was just taking her worry out on Jim. My mother always took up for Jim whenever I would bitch about being cheated or hustled. Mom use to said to me, “Lay off of Jim, he is an orphan”? She understood his pain about the death of his mother. He was her spiritual son. She adored him completely. Keith Richards once said of people like Jim & me that, “People are often driven by certain forces within themselves. They well may be highly intelligent and fully aware of the inevitable results, but nevertheless they succumb to their own weaknesses.” Back in June of 1982 both of us was driven. Jim by success & fame Me by the love of freedom & fear of rejection. Yet, we were AC currents always switching roles.

Finally, I figure out what mom meant two years after Jim died. Mom knew Jim never got over losing his mother’s love. Jim associated betrayal with his mother abandonment. His emotional problem never got healed and eventually led Jim into thinking that there is no real love in the world, that everyone is out to use you to get ahead. To a point, back then, I also believe this is the way it is. Most people will kill you for a penny but if you retreat too much into your own private world you’ll wig out. Years later, I know this to be false. You get what you give.

Around this time I started to look for answers to my own highly dysfunctional life style. I was trying my best to figure out what the hell was going on in my life. Jim had invited me to record Phantom Limb but when I got there I saw that Kurt Tuckerman was in charged so I kick back and got stoned & watched. Kurt hit me as a warm person who comes across as this huge drug burnout. I soon found out that he was somewhat of a math junkie. They did

“admission of guilt” as flexi-disk, which Tim Anstead at the Tet Offence released in one of his issues. Wow, the irony! I could tell that Jim didn’t like what was going on. In many ways he felt trapped by the situation. A major record company offered them a deal but nobody wanted to deal with the problems within the band except for Roxanne. Soon afterward the band broke up and so did the affair. I tried to pretend that everything was fine, that nothing was going on, but I was very uncomfortable when other friends would make jokes about them behind their backs. I didn’t want to know what exactly what was going on. During this peaceful period Jim's writing really began to grow. He showed me the first two chapters of "Drapez". I had never read anything like that before? It took me into another world. He was still jumping around from job to job but a least he was getting some hours in.

In 1982 the forces of pleasure & pain were messing with everyone at some point or another? Finally after burning out on crazy moma's bar & the dyke house, I moved back with my sister. It was during this time that I started dating Tammy our roommate. I was getting into country and Jimbo would crack on me about wanting becoming a hillbilly songwriter. Mom really loved country music but Jimbo was totally baffled? He didn’t understand why I was getting into country music? But Bufu can make a blind man buy a wide screen colored t.v. She pulled on my heartstrings & other vital organs. She was total country. She turned me onto Willie, Waylon, George Jones, Pasty Cline, Hank Williams and many others. It was like I had found a gold mine. I had no idea of the history? I was blown away by the stuff I was hearing. She was the first real woman I had ever met and she used her southern belle femininity as a deadly weapon.

As things move ahead Tommy Jay ask me to stay at his Weber road apartment while he went to Jamaica for 3 weeks. He had moved his studio there and left me a ¼ pound of pot. So I set up shop & got into MTV, which had been on the air for 4 weeks. At the time, nobody knew about MTV in Columbus, Ohio except a handful. Chris the Anarchist came over and we began to experiment with object music. I told Jimbo and he was dying to do some recording with us so he brought Roxanne & Gabe along because they couldn’t afford a babysitter. We did our first real recordings together there on Weber Road. We had a blast! For 3 weeks I recorded stoned

everyday out of my mind. Most of the time we would make it up right on the spot, proof it, then lay it down. Someone would come up with a riff & the rest of us would join in. We might try 1 or 2 run through then go for it. Nobody care about what we played, just as long it sounded good. It was the first time that Jim & I had worked in a studio. One night Anarchist and me were up to no good with some killer hash when I heard a loud crash in the kitchen. The ceiling had fell and dirt was everywhere. This led to legal action on Tommy part due to the fact that landlord would not make repairs. Tommy started to look for a better place away from the city where he could live the type of bohemian life he wanted.

Right after the kitchen riff Ron House, Gerald Nelson, Charles Wince & I tried to form a band. I was so jealous of Ron that I started give the poor sod guff for no reason at all. It would have been one hell of a band! When Tommy got home, him, Stick Hoffman & I started to mess around with object music. I wanted to break new ground and Jim very much like the notion of “object music”. The notion of object music is that there is no difference between a note and a sound. They are one and the same. This session was to become my first 45 entitled “Wedding Vows” which came out in early 1982 and was produce by Mike Rep.

Tommy Jay had decided to move to Harrisburg Ohio. Back then Harrisburg didn’t have any fire or police protection. It was a dream come true. Tommy’s new studio was In the middle of nowhere, no heat, no cops, and no rules. We began to party our asses off all night long. No one could hear us. No one knew about it. And Teddy Lust was our “Honorable” Mayor! Mayor Lust! (One of the best Mayors Harrisburg Ohio has ever had I might add.)

Meanwhile back at the record store Chuck Kubat kept putting on his Saturday night in-store shows. These were always special events with maybe two or three bands and 20 to 30 people in the crowd. Back then everyone was really into drugs. During one of these shows the cops walk in and busted Tommy with LSD. Ouch! Thus began a yearlong battle in the courts, which really wore Tommy down emotionally. In the end he gets off the hook and decides to take a month long vacation with Chris Brown his girlfriend to Jamaican. This time, not only do they leave me a bunch of food & pot, Chris leaves me her brand new Car to drive. Bad

Idea guys! Soon, I'm shooting videos with Fright Train & doing recording sessions with Mike Rep, Mike Rock, Arlus, Chris the Anarchist, Dave Green & Max Flash. I called Jimbo told him of my good fortune. He had just completed his 1st draft of "Drapez" and wanted to do a session of songs from the book. We worked on 3 or 4 songs, which we made up on the spot. It was like two kids in a candy shop! I felt totally free to be who I really was. No work face for a whole month. I had tons of food & drugs, and kick ass studio and musician friends only to happy to record.

When people would pass through and check on me it always ended in a recording session. Now living out in the country is not like the city. Heat was a big deal back then. I didn't know much about wood burning stoves, which is how Tommy heated the place. One day it was colder than hell and I was snowed in. I had plenty of food and dope so I didn't give a rat's ass. Tommy had a bunch of wood he had cut outside that was frozen. I thought I had to thaw it out before I burned it so I left two logs on top of the stove? That done, I go upstairs to record with Freight Train and drink a 12 pack. We are there smoking pot and recording "the stranger" When Freight Train asked, "Do you smell something Squid"? I get up and open the door and a cloud of smoke blast in. "Oh Shit! Fire!" I screamed as we ran down the stairs. The logs on top of the stove were on fire! We ended pitching them outside. Then we up opening all the doors & windows to air out the house. The place smelled like burned wood for weeks.

Next day Freight Train & I are bringing down this 60-pound Sony 2-inch tape video recorder which we drop and it goes bouncing down the stairs! Yikes! Back then they didn't have VCR decks. Somehow, it doesn't get broken? Talk about happy shits! We weren't the only ones with bad luck. When I go to the airport to pick up Chris & Tom they tell me that they got ripped off by some Jamaicans and lost all there money? They had gone 3 weeks without cash. Oh well folks, shit happens!

Tammy had move to Nashville and I had a Squidfish idea about my music. I had planned to do a session at star track studios for a batch on new songs I had written. I ask Rep, Jay, Chris, Jimbo & Stick Hoffman to help me out. I told everyone to bring some beer to the session. The session turned into one big party. Beer & pot was

everywhere! But, a few of the cuts made their way onto my “Squid Songs” LP released in 1983. Jim was quite irritated at me for mixing his guitar down on “Are You Fooling Yourself” I just didn’t think it sounded right? But looking back I was wrong & Jim was right

One day in July of 1983 I just snapped and told Jim that I was moving to Nashville. I had been thinking about it for about six months. I was working but all my money was going to lawyers & bills. I didn't even have a car to get to work. He thought I was losing my mind? Why did I want to be a hillbilly? There is nothing down there? But I needed to find out who I was. I needed to become Nudge Squidfish the songwriter. I had not come into my own at the time. I wanted to have a go as a county and western songwriter. It was time for me to grow up. To be on my own man and not be dependant on my family. It never happened. Go figure? I was tried of not having my freedom. I was selfish and immature & it was time to grow up. I had made a mess of my life and wanted to run away from my family problems. My x-wife didn’t really want me being a musician around my kids anyway. It would be more peaceful for every one. I loved my kids but it was time to do the "Buddha". Sailors, artists & musicians have a gypsy spirit and need change. We are what we are. The minute I made up my mind to go things just fell in place. There were so many economic roadblocks; but fate, rather quickly clear all of them out of my way. Money fell from the sky if by magic. It was the right thing to do at the right time. You move you change your luck. Everyone thought I was nuts. So I quit my city job, drunk some whiskey, snorted some killer coke with Stick Hoffman, and woke up next morning with a hell of a hang over at the Nashville bus station. That was the roughest day of my life. Being all alone with no job & little money I somehow was able to get an apartment that very day. For the next 3 weeks I walked the streets of Nashville every day hunting for a job and running out of money. At night I sat in an empty room with nothing except my bedroll & guitar. It took 3 months to get a phone & radio. It was culture shock.

Nashville was a strange place to be for someone whose is into "object music". I began to meet music industry types and they couldn't figure out what the fuck I was doing there? "You ought to be in New York or L.A." was same thing I heard over & over. Finally

I got a job at the Nashville Gas Company as a mail clerk. The President of the Gas Company, Bill Denny was also a big wig with the Grand Old Opry. He ran a publishing company on the side and sat on the board of the Country Music Hall of Fame. Soon I had joined the Nashville songwriters Association. I began to take songwriting class at Belmont College. I would get drunk at Tooties Orchid lounge and hang out on lower broad or go to the Bluebird café and watch other writers perform. Soon I was picking their brains about songwriting. Weekends would find the squid on 16th Ave checking out studios or hang out at the music stores. I was meeting a lot of traveling players and picking up on Nashville insider gossip. It was an eye opening experience.

Chapter V-3

Jim & I began to write & phone each other once a week. He keep me posted with the cowtown scene. He was doing gigs opening for the likes of John Cale (Velvet Underground) & Dave Thomas (Pere Ubu). He & Roxanne had put together a new band called "Skull Bank" with Tommy Jay & Mike Rep, Both Jim & I were chasing our dreams. He with the college art crowd and I with the country hicks. Most of the time our egos got in the way. We would get big heads and rant and rave about our work. Flights of fancy often occurred for both of us. During this time we drew very close and I got a bird's eye view of Jimbo dark side. It wasn't that he was evil, it was more like a mask he threw over his pain. But no matter what came down we both knew we had a mission together. We both knew that our destinies were intertwined. During this time I spent a lot of

time drinking whiskey and hanging out at Tooties Orchid Lounge or sleeping all night on the front and back steps to the ryman auditorium. Some how I picked up on the 50's country vibe. I could feel all those dead county music souls. It got into my blood just like the blues did in the 60's. This old pawn shop lady who had a store down on lower broad had been a close friend with Patsy Cline. She told me some really cools stories about Willie & Walon when they first got to Nashville. Soon I started carrying a knife around which was a working class tradition of sorts.

Late at night, back in 1984 Nashville would close down on Sunday. No one would be on the streets at 2A.M down at lower Broadway. I had the run of the place. I was a ghost just walking the streets. Sometimes the back door of the ryman auditorium would be open and I would walk out on stage and pretend that I was performing in front of a crowd. My blackouts became so bad that I wouldn't have a clue how I had got inside to sleep. I would spend most of Sunday's morning trying to find my car? Folks had told me about the "Bell Witch". She use to be a friend of President Andrew Jackons and legend had it that she wander the railroad tracks at certain times. On weekends I would walk the tracks hunting for her. It got to the point were I was drinking about 4 or 5 bottles of whiskey a week. During my blackouts she would appear to me and demand that I stop my drinking. After 2 months of these weekly visits Mr. Jackson also began appeared along with her. But I would not listen to these "ghosts" until one faithful night when they came with sticks, which, I tried to stop them from beating me with. When I woke up in my bed the next morning I was bruised from head to toe with stick marks. That day I stop drinking and started to go to church which help bring me back into balance. I had been working on two LP's while I was in Nashville. Music row was not ready for these "Squid-abilly" records. Yet, I did turn some heads. Nashville didn't know what to think of my sort of country. Most thought I was making fun of country music. I wasn't. I just tried to be country in my own weirdo way. Jimbo thought it was great that I was doing something new with country. He loved it! He slowly came around to it. He was my one & only fan at the time.

Back in Ohio, my kids were taking an emotional beating without me. Unlike Jim, I wasn't good at being a father. Nashville tried her best to keep me. I was told that if I hung in there for 10 more years

I receive the business support needed to launch my career. But in the end it was time to end my experiments and return to cowtown. So in July of 1985, on a rainy day I packed it in and moved back to cowtown. When I got back I was shocked to discover that Roxanne was pregnet with Kale. I never understood why they didn't tell me? After all you can only hide sometime like that for a few months. Mike Rep had been working at GO Coin, which was a vending machine company that serviced bars in Columbus. His job was to program the jukeboxes with music. Rep had just got Jimbo on as a route man. Jimbo would go to the bars collect the money and maybe drink a few while on the job. He loved the job because the bar owners would give him free drinks. This was a stable period for Jim and it lasted from 1985 till 1992. It appeared to me that Jim & Roxanne had turned a corner. With the new baby on the way & steady cash in hand they became devoted to each other. They wanted to be a normal family, like "leave it to beaver" or something?

I began to hang around the fort with Chris the Anarchist and got to know Dave Immel & Keyvn Kasuality. Jim & I began to record together when ever we could. Usually I would set up on his kitchen table and we would make songs up on the spot. Slowly, I picked up where I left off in Nashville and began to send off cassettes of my solo stuff to fanzines. Sometimes all three of us would go off on a lark and the results would be great. Both Jim & Roxanne wanted to start a band but with a newborn child they couldn't. One day I was at Chuck's record store and ran into Rudeboy who told me that his band Keyen & the Kausalities needed a bass player. So I joined and from July 1985 to July 1986 I giged around cowtown. By July 1986 Jim was itching to do some gigs. He had come to some of our shows. Jim & Roxanne asked us to do a gig at the Travel Agency. Kevin & the Kausalities would open the show with a set then Jim would do 3 or 4 solo songs and Roxanne would came up and do a duet with him. After this Rudeboy & I would join them and end the show. It didn't take long for us to figure out that we wanted to form a band. That 1st show we went into the parking lot and Jim ran Rudy & I through the songs. Everything just clicked. We all knew that we had something special. Keyen must have saw the writing on the wall? Jim & Roxanne kept the pressure up by booking more shows. We use to practice at Jim's. We didn't have a PA so we sang through Jim's stereo. Rudy didn't have much of a kit

back then either. We just tried to make do. At the time we were really into U-2, so, As a joke Jim made a poster and billed us as V-3? I found that out while walking down the street one day. He didn't even bother to ask us about what we should call ourselves? 7 years later I would quit over this same disregard for rights over cash & songwriting credits. But at the time working up our show at his Forshty Ave address I had no idea how power driven Jim was becoming. At 1st I thought we only would do only 1 or 2 shows and that would be it? But Jim had a secret plan. He wanted for us to break college radio big time. Years before Phomtom Limb fail because of relationship issues between the band members. Now the road was clear for Jim to chase his dream and keep his family secure to boot. They began to put pressure on Rude & I to join up full time. They wanted us to quit Keyvn. In my view Rudy has always been a "worm" about tuff decisions. So he pushes the choice off on others so as not to accept responsibility for his actions. "I'm just the drummer chief" was always his excuse. When the big day came I sat down with Kevyn and told him that "I just couldn't do it anymore". True to form Rudy didn't even show up for the meeting. Little did I know the song credits, cash payment & product design would become a major struggle between Jim & I years later. I thought we were a team, but Jim acted like we were his backing band. By 1996 we had overcame these issues. And maybe if there weren't this tension over business the music would have suffered? Year's later Jimbo tried to cheat Leland & Sam in this same manner but Leland got an attorney to call Warner Brothers about his rights and Jimbo quickly caved in. I was fucking truly amazed at the way Leland cut Jim off at the pass? I had never been able to do that because I could never stand up to him and say no.

Chapter -4-
"Negotiate Nothing"

In 1986 V-3 was trying of come up and image & sound. Joy Division & U-2 had a strong influence on the band but as things settled down Jim & I focused on a balance between noise & pop with a dash of art mixed in for good measure. Both Jim & I were writing a furious rate but Jim would limit most of the music to his stuff. Jim would love to shop people for ideas and we were always looking for a new trick or two. I certainly got more songs into V-3 than poor Roxanne. Jim edited her the most. We rarely did shows. Back then

most bands were playing 2 or 3 times a week. V-3 was only playing 1 or 2 times every 6 months. People wonder if we really a band at all? "They never do shows"? But we were focusing on developing our "live" Vs "studio" sound. We didn't want to be another guitar band so we began to use keyboards to break up our sound. The "weird & pop" formula both attracted & repelled our fans. Here we were one of the 1st. Low-fi Hi-powered art bands around. Add to this that we had a women front & 3 singing writers to boot. I had engineered our early release on my 4 track and soon people began to notice. By July of 1987 we were the best-kept secret in Columbus Ohio. Most clubs wouldn't book us due to the fact that we had rubbed the power brokers in town the wrong way. We were stoned walled in 1986. We got around this by being booked by the Newport for the "Crime & the City Solution" show. After that our gigs attendance quickly went from a few to many. We began to headline gigs but still got no local press. Then in 1988 we got a review in "Forced Exposure" which was weird considering we only had a cassette out? We had released Unbroken Silence in 1987 and it would foreshadow the relationship between members many years later. The shock was immediate on the Columbus scene. We were no longer ignored and the clubs began calling us for gigs.

Jimbo had been in touch with a record company called Ropeburn. They wanted to put a V-3 Cd out. By this time Jim was controlling all contacts to & from the band. Rudy & me didn't like it but we were so lazy and neither one of us would stand up to Jim about it. Jim was pulling shit on all three of us. I think Roxanne got the worst of it. She tried her best to pull Jim into the democracy but he had so much ambition back then that it just ate away at him. Our 1st release on Ropeburn ended up being a Jim Shepard solo project covered under the notion of "Vertical Slit & Beyond" 1989. Jim's highhanded tactics put off all three of us. Why promote an old band when V-3 was happening? But Jim was trying to build a history for himself. It was at this point that I saw that Jim was putting his solo stuff over V-3? A lot of people's contributions got ignored. Jim used our talent to promote his art. I thought we were equals, but Jim tricked us into being hired guns? This was a major cause of fighting within the band. Only toward the last 2 years of His life did Jimbo overcome his ego's ambition.

As 1989 began V-3 was working on "Psychic Dance Hall". Jim & I had butted heads over getting a second guitar player. Jim wanted to expand but I didn't want to change the band balance. Roxanne settled it by buying a cheap K-mart guitar. Jim bought her an amp and she fit right in. Soon we began to work on new songs. All 3 of us were writing our asses off. For the recordings Jim contacted Kurt Tuckerman who had a small 8-track studio on 5th Ave in Columbus Ohio. Jim & Roxanne had been going at it again. The same old issues had flared up between them. The recording sessions were very stressful due to the fact that Jim & Roxanne weren't speaking to each other. Rude & I tip toe around them. All kinds of issue had grown up between them. Both of them said that if they broke up the band would still go on. When "Psychic Dance Hall" was done Jim doled out credits. The songs were supposed to be credited as "all songs by V-3" but it didn't get released that way? And Jim kept all profits. When I would bitch he would justify it by saying they had to pay for baby sitters & postage. True, but what about me buying an amp & P.A. for the band? Why should I have to pay for them being able to rehearse? Back then everybody was so childish. Again Rudy & I were kept out of the loop when it came to packaging & promoting. After recording our last song I told the band that I was going to college. For the last two years I had been staying with my mom and I wanted to get a place of my own. To do that I needed to be re-trained because of my skin problems with printing. And to this the fact that a x-wife was fucking her attorney and they decided to take me backs to court for child support. The kid had just turned 18 and they felt that I should have to pay till she was 25? But I couldn't work as a printer anymore. As it turns outs, the x-wife married the asshole and he runs for domestic court judge? But the shaker & movers gets wind of the bullshit he is running on me and he loses the election. They ended up having 2 kids. Last I heard was that he got custody of the kids. During the next 3 years the band was very supportive of my plight. If it wasn't for Jim & Roxanne I wouldn't have held it together. They proved their friendship many time over.

V-3 began doing shows with our new line up in 1990. We had taken a 6-month layoff and when we returned new bands had come to the scene. The Econthugs & New Bomb Turks were now opening up for us. Jim & I hunkered down and focus on V-3 recording & writing. We had always been a songwriting team but nobody out side of the

band knew it. We released the fruit of our experiments in 1991 with the "Earth Muffin" & "Monsters of Hollywood" 7" EPS. Still, what Jim & I really wanted a major recording contract. Jim & I convinced Rudy to leave his BP gas station job back in 1988 and to go to work with Jim at a vending machine company "Shaffer Services". By the time we put out these 7" Eps Jim had been re-selling used CDs from the company's stockroom. I really loved Jim's job because I got turned on to all the new CD releases by the majors. But trouble was brewing. Roxanne in January 1992 taken a job at a department store for extra money. Jim & Roxanne had been drifting apart. Each had their own world and was only going through the motions of keeping up appearances. When Jim had found a letter in Roxanne purse all hell broke loose. The situation exploded and both sides declared war on the other. Jim angrily moved out and slept in his car for 2 weeks while still holding on to his job. That night Jimbo and I talked about what he should do. I told him to work out some sort agreement with her for the sake of the kids, which they did. But, he made it painfully clear to me that Roxanne and him were finally over. Jim demanded that I choose between him and her. Either she got kicked out of V-3 or he quit. It was not very much fun for me being in the middle of the mess. For the next 2 months I walked him through the healing process and pushed him towards renting Kurt Tuckman's studio on 5th Ave.

After moving into the studio were V-3 had recorded "Psychic Dance Hall" Jim had drop 60 lbs. and was dating 3 or 4 women. He began to drink himself to sleep while smoking. He would smoke in bed then pass out with the cigarette still lit. On one occasion Charles Ciccrella put out a mattress fire and saved Jim's life. Soon thereafter I get this call from an excited Jim. Jim said Roxanne had cast a spell on him while he was with this welfare moma who had three kids. It seems that out of the blue, the chair he was siting in brust into fire? After a rigorous inspection no cause could be found? Both Roxanne & I were into magic so Jim asks if I thought a spell had been cast? "I'm not sure", I said. Jim said Roxanne "Really hated the bitch? What should I do"? I told him to "Break up with her", which he did. Better than getting your balls roasted off I thought! *(Years later I would cast a revenge spell on Jim which, I believed caused him to get his hand caught in a machine at work? I had been experimenting with the dark forces of nature. I didn't even realize the forces I unleashed on him.)* For the time being

Jimbo put the music on hold. He needed time to sort things out. The split with Roxanne had forced Jim into a very dark dungeon.

On the job things were coming to a boil. Jim had been warned repeatedly about being late. Also, the boss was on to him about ripping off the CDs from the stockroom. After again setting his bed on fire from smoking Jim moved into Rick Kasper's house on the East Side of Columbus and temporally quit smoking. About this time Jim started dating Valerie Seely and did a few gigs with her band called "Creature". She had a healing effect on Jimbo which help to restore his emotional balance. As Jim adjusted to the single life we were inspired to get V-3 moving again. Rick Caspers had build an 8-track studio in the basement and it was filled to the gills with equipment. Soon Me, Rude & Jim began to rehearse and our sound became much more street tuff than it had ever been before. The chemistry had changed and there was senses of lost & hope in the air.

Also during early 1992 dark clouds we gathering around Rudy and his wife. She took to partying with her "Goth" friends and this soon led to her not coming home on the weekends. Rudy was having a tuff time trying to make sense of the confusion. In fact, none of us were in very good shape; yet, out of the emotional chaos we began to work on "Negotiate Nothing". Now, I am of the opinion that the record reflexes this. It was a milestone in that all 3 of us had metamorphosed into adult reptiles. To us life sucked and we were out to get all the goodies we could. If "Psychic Dance Hall" was the light of our souls seeping through then "Negotiate Nothing" was the reptilian acceptance of our dark lots in life. Rudy use to say that these records were night & day. However, in the darkness the bonds between us grew stronger. One day Jim had invited this gifted poet named Charles Ciccrella to over dub some vocals. Jim had sort of adopted Charles as his artistic apprentice. He was like a kid with fucking chia a pet? Every day he would check up to see how Ciccrella was doing then brag to me about it. Yak, Yak Yak, Charlie this or Charlie that!

I had met the "phenomena" through Jim back in 1989. Now if Jim was "Doctor Evil" then Charles Eric Ciccrella certainly was Jim's "mini-me"! In 1989 Jim had wanted me to do a project with Charles but I had declined because I didn't grasp the amazing "personality"

of Charles Eric Ciccrella? "What fucking planet was he from" I asked Jim? However, neither one of us could pass up an opportunity to take shots at the kid. All I can say is that we both got a lot of "joy out it" at Charles' expense. It took me a few years to figure out that Ciccrella was really a "cream puff" on the inside. When it came time to do the ***"Panic Tour of 1992"*** Jimbo insisted that Charles be allowed to come along. Rudy was rubbed with it but I didn't really give a rat's ass one way or another. There had been some sadness about Roxanne departure hanging over V-3. Charles would lighten things up. After Roxanne's influence had waned V-3 started this tradition of allowing our friends to come up on stage and do a song or two with us.

As we got ready for CBGB's Jimbo wanted "mini-me" to do an ad-lib with V-3 in New York. "OK. Wait til they get a load of that," I thought! Jim had become Charles' biggest advocate so to speak. On more than one occasion he blew off some bimbo to hang out with Charles instead. Their friendship was "hilarious"; it reminded me of the Cohan Brothers film ***"O Brother, Where Are Thou?"*** They were both so dam artistic they didn't even realize how funny the situations they ended up in were? Just listen to their video of **"game of sport"** and you'll catch my drift.

Jim was always probing into Charles' business in hopes of identifying some useful resources. They both artistically shopped each other for ideas till the day that Jim died. Yet, I have to give Charles credit. He was one fucking mean ass Chihuahua! He never caves into to Jim's Machiavellian bullshit. And, when it came to "Buns Up and Begging Babes" Charles was like ***bongo monkey in love.*** Come and see the "eight wonder of the world folks" I use to mutter under my breath. Jim had nicknamed him the "testertone kid" behind his back because of the way Charles uses poetry to wooed his women. He was relentless.

When the day had finally came, Jimbo shows up with Rudy and a brand new rental van. The 3-day road trip was a like being in a dream. When we got to Philadelphia we play the "Kyber Pass" & stayed at the Strapping Field Hands apartment. The next day we play some university. I got to snooping around and discover a locker room with showers. Now after a 10-hour drive without a bath one starts to stink so off I go into the shower. When I am done

everyone is looking at me like I've got balls down to my ankles? It didn't really occur to me that I was being rude?

The next day we arrive in New York City. The pressure was on. We kept getting curious looks from everyone in the club. People where wondering if we could stand & deliver? We had something else in mind? Could we pull off an ad-lib without them knowing it was an ad-lib? Yes, we could. They didn't have a clue. Backstage things are getting crazy. Two of Charles lady friends show up stoned and start flashing their tits at us. Rude & me are quite amused. Later I go deep down into the restroom to blow a joint and get really stoned. Some guy offers me a blowjob but I refer him to Charles. There were about 6 bands on the bill and we didn't go on until 2 am which really blew me away because most clubs close down at that time back in Columbus. I thought the place would be empty? When I walked out on stage I was shocked to see it was a fully house of dopers? Like a fucking grateful dead crowd or something?

Suddenly some guy gets stabbed and he jumps up squirting blood on my Mic stand and falls to the floor. Blood is gushing out from a knife wound to his gut. This other dude is ready to cut off his dick when the next thing I know both are quickly jettisoned out the front door and a big pool of blood is at my feet? A stagehand jumps ups and soaks up the blood. Soon, he gives us the ok to start the show. People yell, "play some fucking music"! I tell Jimbo we're ready and he shrugs his head. We start our show and half way through Charles comes up and we ad-lib a song. Charles starts bouncing his head off the stage and huge lump forms on his brow. The crowd is surprised & pleased at our intensity. They were really digging it. Then Jim boots Charles ass off stage just to let everyone know Jim is the Star of this show. Nobody knew it was a jam. After the show Jimbo is cutting a deal behind our backs with a record label; but I'm worried about getting jumped and start bitching about splitting. Charles is in rock star heaven & and Rudy is about ready to punch him out. The record label is going to give Jim $3000 dollars advance to sign V-3 but Jim doesn't say a word to the band about it. Is he is going to pocket the money and get us to do it for free? A month later Rudy & me get wind of this from the New Bomb Turks lead singer. Talk about pissed off!

A few weeks after we get home Jim is fired from his job for stealing Cds. Rudy is forced to take over Jimbo's job and this creates tension between them. In return Jim feels Rude betrayed him. Go figure? Jim had broken up with Valerie Seely of Creature about a month before the tour. Without a women to stabilize Jim emotionally He relapse back into depression. I tried to put a positive spin on things but I was bogged down with college life and didn't have much time. So Jim began drinking more. After the tour Jim just flips out. He started fucking people over every chance he got. Loosing his kids & job had messed up his emotional balance. He was angry at life I guess? Then Jim starts chasing Charles's girlfriend Stacy? At a Milo poetry reading Jim & Charles get into a fistfight over Stacy and their friendship is temporary broken when Stacy chooses Jim over Charles as her new lover. Next thing I know Stacy is pushing Jim to get custody of his kids. I try to warn Jim to keep Stacy out of it but he didn't understand. He was mad. He blamed Roxanne for everything.

Roxanne quickly retaliates. She disappears. Once the dust settles Jim is shocked & crushed. I had tried to warn him. Roxanne is a fighter. You just don't fuck with her. One day, I had this hunch so I stop over at her house and it is empty. Jim didn't believe me and check it out a few days later. Then Jim calls me I can tell he is really hurting about it. He had tried to track her down but no luck. Vanished! After a few weeks Jim comes to accept the fact that his kids are gone. "I'll never see them again squid", he said. I would reply, "oh yes you will"! So we came to the point where there is nothing we can do but tied up lose ends with V-3.

About this time Rudy & me have had it with the music business. Both of us were tried of being cheated. We were tried of Jimbo's ego being out of control. We were tried of Jimbo spending our money and running around making decicion without consulting us. I was sick and tried of being mistreated. The tension was growing between all 3 of us. It got so bad that Rudy wouldn't even return my phone calls. He acted like it was my entire fault? I thought, "Well fuck it squid, Cutbail. Walkway". In June of 1993 Rudy & I decide to confront Jim over the Johan Kugelberg deal in New York which by that time had fell apart. At our last show together I discover that Jim had given the gig money to Bela for a 7" compilation EP on anyway records. He didn't even tell us what he

was doing. I had to find out from Bela? At that point I quit V-3 and Jim & I no longer spoke. All 3 of us were pissed off at each other. But the last dance wasn't over the reptile club. We had worked our asses off 7 years and V-3 was no longer any fun or very artistic. The band had become a product, which is what I guess it was suppose to do anyway? We were posers for the public & press riding the Seattle's grunge movement. The egos were all out of control and we were blaming each other for it. To make things worst none us had made any money out of the deal?

Chapter -5-
"American Face"

In September of 1993 I moved into studio 110 at the Milo Arts Commune. Charles had been living there for about 2 years. It was during this time period that I really got to know Charles. I sometimes would help him put on the Milo coffeehouse poetry readings. Neither one of us were speaking with Jim at the time. Yet, somehow I knew that we would get back in touch. I just didn't know how? At the time Jim & Stacy were living on the eastside and had dropped out of the music scene completely. Jim was trying to pull his life together with Stacy. He wanted to get back to the old life style he had had with Roxanne & the Kids. He wanted to be normal. I don't blame him. Hell we all wanted to be normal! He even had cut out smoking and drinking for a while.

I had heard that he had a new band call "lacquer" through the grapevine. He had met Leland Cain and they formed a two piece. One day, after about a 10 months, I get a call from Jimbo. He is in the hospital due to the fact that he caught his hand in a machine at work. He was in bad shape. The doctor's had sewed his hand in to his gut in order to graft new flesh onto the bones. Next day Tommy Jay & I went to see him. After our visit, being the asshole I am I began to sing, "I am a little tea pot short and stout, here is my handle here is my spout". Revenge ain't all it is cracked up to be folks! Jim would be on morphine for about 3 months and would face many painful surgeys over the next 15 months. In the mean time he began to write with his good hand at a furious rate. He would stop over at my loft at Milo & play guitar with his hand wrapped up.

In February of 1994 Arlus Stitch died from a heroin overdose. Everyone knew that it was coming but no one could avoid the shock. Jim & I were really hit hard by her death. Jim's attuide towards death was obsessive. I often felt he worship it as a holy event. He viewed it with a great sense of loss due to his mother. As we began working through our old band issues Jim seemed to have turn a minor conner within. He no longer wanted to cheat others out of their fair share. He really tried to deal fairly over old money issues with me. We began to record at my Milo Arts 110 Studio. A few of these cuts ended up on the "Picking Through the Wreckage With a Stick" (1994) and "Evil, Love Deeper" (1995) Lps. At first only Jim and I began to recorded. Then later we worked in "Lacquer" & Tom Dark's band "Step Sister" (Cleveland).

Around December of 1994 Charles and his band "The Sun" bought an old beat up van and hit the road for a tour of the USA. Funny thing was, they didn't have any bookings? Jim & I both thought Charles was nuts. As they drove off in January of 1995 Johan Kugelberg of America Records contacted Jim about a record deal. Jim needed to put a band together fast! He wanted to use Leland Cain on bass and had been using the New Bomb Turks drummer as a hired gun. That wasn't going to work. Jim needed his own drummer. I knew of two really good drummers at the time-Chris Campanile & Sam Brown. When Charles took Chris on the road I told Jim to go with Sam.

At first Jim had his doubts. He wanted to get Rudy but Rude wanted no more of touring or the music business. Besides, Rudy's situation at home was falling apart. He had his hands full. When Jim heard Sam play he was sold. Jim had been pressing me to play guitar in the new V-3 lineup. But when he wouldn't let me on the American Records contract I bowed out. We agreed I would do management with him that way I was still part of V-3 which was a selling point I guess? Jim was kind of very hurt that I didn't want to dance that money dance again. For the "Photograph Burns" sessions he had 3 drummers –Sam Brown, Rude Smith & Dave Mikula. By that fall he had a lawyer ok the contract with America Records. Soon he was doing lots of out of state gigs and it was off to the races.

But the pressure led to him drinking a 6 pack every night to inspire his writing. At first Stacy put up with it. But by Xmas of 1995 Stacy

began to complain about the drinking. She didn’t understand why Jim drank so much? Then one day she gets a wake up call and it is like "My God, I've been fucking Jeffrey Dahmer!" So it was time for her to scram! She had gotten a credit card, which Jim had maxed out long ago for new equipment. He told her he would pay her back when the $5,000 in advance money came in from the record label. Also, he promised Rude a $1000 to get him to play drums on "Photograph Burns". Needless to say it took Rudy 3 years to get his money from Jim. In fact, I twisted his arm about it for a whole two years before he finally caved in.

Jim had to fly out to LA for meeting & mixdown of the "Photograph Burns" record. It was during this time that Stacey started dating **"Wang The Wonder Dog"** behind Jim’s back. When Jimbo got back into Columbus he was shocked shitless to find that Stacy had moved her rapidly expanding ass out. The apartment was stripped clean! Jimbo was devastated. He would call me late at night crying asking if I thought she was seeing someone else? "No" I said while hearing a voice in my head! "Do bears shit in the woods? She fucking the hell out of him" I could see visions of them under trees, on tables, in the back seat of car and on the steps of the White House! I knew I had to pushed Jim towards dating. The sooner he got his "fur pie meds" the better I reasoned. At first he wasn’t into it but I kept up the pressure and finally he ran an ad. He was so excited & shocked when he got a few replies. We talked for hours about which one looked like the best prospect. Soon he was introducing me to Jerry his new girlfriend. She was fun to be around and liked art. But Jimbo was looking for something else? He wanted someone as dark as he was but who also was normal. He was looking for another Roxanne.

He needed a mother to take care of him. Jerry was just too sweet & nice. Jim liked her as a person but it wasn’t a good fit. Jim was coming to accept the "Vampire" within him. He began to accept who he was. Once he knew for sure that Stacy had left him for another man Jim quit posing as somebody from the middle class. He returned to the demon. He now fully accepted that he was a reptile who more than anything else missed his kids. He kept telling me over & over that he thought he would never see them again. But I knew better. I told him over & over that when they would come back into his life, “What ever you do man, don’t fight with

Roxanne”. Slowly he came to understand what I meant. I stayed with Jimbo at his apartment in November & December of 1995. We plan how we would push V-3's tour in 1996.

I had moved into my sister’s place on Kimberly Ave in January and by March of 1996 we were filming Jim’s "America Face" video. Jim had moved in with Von who had move up from Texas. To make the record label happy Leland, Jim and Von had done a few gigs as V-3 in Boston & New York. Jim was beginning to see that strings had been attached to his contract. He was going to have to play the game and do what they wanted. Some of which he was very contemptuous of. Jim thought that most journalists were assholes. He didn't like dealing with them. Jim had moved on from Jerry and was again enjoying the field. But something was missing and he wanted to find it. Jim had been dating Julie Otten a poet; Cloud Tiger a musician and some real high power Vogue magazine model. Jim really liked Julie & Cloud and they stayed good friends till his death.

The model would fly in from New York & San Francisco a lot. She had a studio loft at this upscale condo in downtown Columbus. She was a high roller as far as I could tell. A real knock out of women-blond & blue eyed, with a body of a goddess. She was always giving Jim the keys to her studio and sports car. Man oh man could that car move! One day Jimbo confides in me that she wants to do a three way with me Jim & her? Suddenly, I felt a great light shining on me, just like Moses when he was parting the Red Sea! I found out later that she was a wealthy nymphomaniac who worked as a buyer for “Victoria Secrets”. Jim told me that it would take a battalion of combat marines to satisfy her. Oneday She took Jim & I to this upscale restaurant and is paying for everything. Suddenly, under the table, she began rubbing us and grinning at both Jim & I? I was in heaven. Next thing I know is that all three of us get very, very drunk. Next morning I wake up in my bed and don’t have a clue what happen or how I got home? When I talked to Jim later he tells me that he is going to break up with her because she too hot to handle. He was stressed! The old sod was exuished! He was complaining how sore he was and how she wouldn’t let him go home. Then the shit came down. Jim was into her for about $500 bucks and she wanted her money back if Jim was going to leave

her. I told Jim he better disappear which he did, just like a Nixon file. Phoof!!!!!

In the meantime V-3 was schuled to do a show which was announced in the press. Bad Idea. The plan was to do the show then head out on the road with Guide by Voices & Spoon. But Jim owed Stacy lots money and had disappeared on her ass too! Jim was pissed off at her for dumping him so he was going to get her back. But, the night of the show Stacy shows up with some cops and they snag Jimbo's guitar and amp. At first I though they were going to take Jim to jail but he talks his way out of it. Poor Jim was busted in front of everybody! I felt so sorry for him but there was nothing I could do. As the cops were carting his rig out the door Don Holland of the "Bassholes" saves the day by offering Jim his rig.

Jim was still dating but wasn't committed to anyone. To me the only two women that Jim was truly close to during this period were Julie Otten & Cloud Tiger. Maybe it was because they were both artists and like Roxanne could see through Jim's bull. Yet, I know Jim kept both of them at an arms length when it came to his heart. He like both of them but he just didn't trust any women with his heart. Not after what he had been through. Beside, He really didn't want to ruin anymore women. He knew he if he got too close bad things would happen. He was beginning to regret some of the choices he had made in life. By this time he had come to the conclusion that he just couldn't trust anyone with his inner workings. Over and over he would tell me "squid don't tell people your secrets". I never really understood what he meant until after his death. In the end you think you know people, but you really don't? Why? -because their secrets imprison them. How can someone know & forgive you when most people don't even know & forgive themselves? You can't do that by trying to rewrite history, or by hiding from your choices. One must seek to accept their mistakes and move on with life because the truth has a tendency to follow one around.

Towards the end of 1996 Jim & I both came to the conclusion that the music industry appealed to the lowest common denominator of public tastes for the sake of profits. Simply put, like any other industy tastes are manufactured. The realization that our dream of being rich & famous was dependant on endless repetition of worn

out ideas seemed like a the joke. All these years we had been fools. The cruel universe exploded all our Idealism about music. I had spent my whole life chasing it only to discover that it was the truest form of bullshit on earth. Artists think that in the grand scheme of things their art matters, but in the end it doesn't. In the end we come and do the work then we go. We just happen to be writers this time around. It is no big deal. Why make it so?

Our dream of being rock stars was a prison, same as being a wage slave. We were fools short & simple. Once Jim & I saw the truth of being "rock stars" we walked away from it. Jim wanted out of his 5 CD recorded contract with American. All he had to do was refuse to tour and the record company would be forced to buy him out. He would then go back to being a nobody artists- So he thought? Better to be a wage slave and do your art as a hobby we reasoned? Wrong, it doesn't work that way. Fame & success tags you for life. You can run but you can't hide. People expect you to entertain them. In Columbus Ohio people always expected you to be "on". You're expected to entertain them 24-7? The release of V-3's "Super Human" & "Elevator To The Gas Chamber" EPs grabbed a lot of press. On top of this we were both having a one hell of a time again with our egos. So now our mission had changed. We still wanted to rock but we didn't want to do it as professionals. In the beginning we craved acknowledgement. When we got it we wanted obscurity. Go figure? Only after Jim's death was I able to balance this out.

Chapter -6-
"Cruel Universe"

In January 1997 American Records bought out Jimbo's record contract & workmen's compensation settled on his hand claim. Jim was sitting pretty with a big fat bank account. Like myself he had a number of dick jobs since being fired from Shaffer Services in 1992. He quit working and began to travel the USA. Yet, he was dying because of his kids. "I'll never see them again" he would tell me. "Oh yes you will! And when you do don't fight with her or she won't let you see the kids" I would reply. One day he ask me what he should to do with all his money and I told him to invest in the stock market for the sake of his kids. "Beside, you should be able to live very well off the interest if you play your cards right"? I told

him. Looking back it was a bad call. Neither one of us knew shit about playing that game and it would come back to bite him toward the end of his life.

Jim needed his own place. He was sort of confused because he really was into keeping his needs simple and didn't really need all this money. It was so ironic. All his life he had dreamed of being in this financial position and now that it had happened he didn't know how to handle it? He only need booze, cigarettes and an old 50's model typewriter to keep him happy. His roommates wanted him to move so Jim started looking around for the cheapest place he could find and took a small room over the Garden Theater on the Conner of 5th & High in Columbus.

Jim was so proud of his place because it was a perfect bohemian fit for his muse. The place was a seedy shit of a dump smelling of roach powder and urine. A real fucking Pulp Fiction trip! But it was cheap and Jim loved that. There was an all star cast of seedy motherfuckers just below Jim's window and I saw the cops beating the shit out some slick ass chumps quite a few times. Down the hall Hippie Dave and his wife Moe lived and Jim would stop in from time to time to chat.

In September of 1997 Kevin Kasualty died and everyone was really shocked & depressed. How could this happen? Kevin was a great songwriter? Yet, after 13 years of giging & recording nobody knew about him? But everybody knew about **"The New Kids On The Block"** or **"Puke Rock"** Go figure that one out for me? Rudy & I had been in a band with him before joining V-3. So much negativity was coming down so quickly that we were all struggling to make sense of life? A wake & a show were hastily put together in honor of Kevin. When I showed up at the funeral all that was left of Kevin was a little box. I was in shock. All I could say to the box was " Nice Tie Kevin"! Jim, Dave and Charles had done the Kevin Casualty memorial gig together and Jim began to mentor Hippie Dave towards playing guitar. By this time V-3 was only playing shows once in a while. Both Sam & Leland had other projects going.

Onetime he and Leland got so fucking drunk they knocked a mixed drink into Jim's new 4-track tape deck. I also had accomplished this happy feat many years earlier with Arlus. Jim asked me what he

should do? I told him to pull a Murphy and send the prick back to the manufacture and say it just went dead. We fudged the warranty paperwork and to my surprise they fell for it? Jim got a brand new deck? Whoopee! Jim was begging to explore other musical formats. He was really getting sick & tried of music scene game and just wanted to make art. Maybe that's the difference between an entertainer & a writer? Anyway, around March of 1997 Jim had a V-3 show booked at the Distillery near OSU and Leland couldn't get up to Columbus from Cincinnati because he was having final exams that week.

Jim asked me to step in for Leland on bass. I hadn't played a gig with Jim since 1993 but I knew all the songs. Shit, I had wrote half of them with Jim? So after a quick run through of the set hours before show time we just showed up and play with no group rehearsal. Sam was a little surprised. He wasn't sure I knew all the parts? We pulled it off and headed to the back stairwell. It was just like to old days. People were coming up and congratulating us talking shit about their bands as we soaked our towels with sweat. Soon the pot mist engulfed us and all was right in god's heaven. Little did I know that it would be the last time I would be on stage with a genius & legend- 17 months later Jim would be dead.

By late April of 1997 I began to finish up a record with Papparatt who was writing Reggae music with a twist. I hadn't seen Rudeboy since 1993 so I gave him a call and asked if he would want to record with Papparatt? Rudy & Jim were very curious about this. Neither one had any experience with this sort of thing. There would be 7 or 8 people show up for the sessions and we party almost every weekend. It was great to have the 3 of us jamming together again. It had been such a long time. Jim, Rudy & I were having the time of our lives. None of us wanted to do any gigs because other musicians were passing through and there were lots of spontaneous jam sessions. Rude & I had set up a sound stage in the basement of my Kimberly Ave house for the loud blasting stuff; while up on the 3 rd floor we had a separate control room along with a extra drum room for the soft shit.

Alone Jim and I would record something every now and then but he would always take the master tapes and I never got to hear any of it. This causes some friction but was no where near the level of the

old days. In May of 1997 I began to notice that Jim was drinking very heavily again. It took about 12 beers for him just to go to sleep. Every night he would get blasted. I think it was because he missed his kids so much. Jim wanted Rude & me to do some v-3 shows but there was just to much history and Rudy wasn't going to do shit until he got his $1000 bucks for the Photograph Burns record. I kept putting more & more pressure on Jimbo until finally he caves in and pays Rudy. Jim wanted us to re-team as v-3 but Rude & I wanted to start our own music club which we called “studio 110”.

At first Jim didn’t like it. There was this completion between Jim & us. He wanted us to be v-3 again but once he saw how much fun we were having he warmed up quickly to the “club” notion. Yet, he never really let go of re-uniting v-3. Maybe because v-3 had grown up with his family? “We all have our demons” he would say when things got bad. Yet Jim the king of scorpions and had lost his singer. He no long tried to control the rest of us. Rudy use to tell me that if a scorpion is caught in a ring of fire it will sting itself to death. Jim had come full circle. All he wanted was to be close with his family and friends and that was impossible for the demon in him to accept.

One day Jim & I sat down and promised each other that in our next lifetimes we would explore another world beyond our system. We are going to be on a team of about a hundred people who travel to another solar system. The trip will take about 50 year's round trip. On this mission Jim will be killed on a space walk. It was the weirdest conversation we ever had yet we shook hands on it? Then I told him how much I loved him and how sorry I was for being mean to him. He told me that he had tuff skin and that it just rolled off his back. I hug him and he left. That day Jim let me inside.

In November of 1997 I got this phone call and it is Gabe, Jim’s son? He had just turned 18 and wanted to live with his dad. I was shocked & pleased but when I went to pick him up at the dairy mart near my house I quickly saw that the car he was driving was highly illegal. Gabe proudly showed me 2 ounces of pot. “Oh shit” I thought. To make matters worst that Dairy Mart was a police hang out. The cops got free coffee & donuts there. How he didn’t get busted is a pure mystery to me? But there was more! Gabe had

brought Danielle with him. He dutifully informed me that they had been dating 2 weeks and had to get married because she was pregnet. “God Dam” I thought through squidly smile. “Oh Lucy I’m home," I said under my breath as Jimbo enter my house. They had nowhere to go and had got my phone number off of Ron House at Used Kids. Jim only had voice mail at the time. I left messages then set up a bedroom for the kids to crash in. For the last 2 days they had been on the road avoiding the cops. They were dirty & tired. Soon Jim shows up and was so happy he almost died. Afterward I video the jam session us.

That night we all caught up on the last 5 years of Gabe's life. I got the impression that Roxanne had lost control of Gabe and that she was turning it over to Jim. But Jim was so happy he could not see the big picture. All he knew was the he had his son back. Finally it is time for bed & Jim leaves. They took baths then went into the room and started fucking…fucking… and fucking! I thought Gabe dick would drop off? Either that or he is best hung man in history? They sounded like sumo wrestlers! Boom Boom Boom slapping meat sound all night long. For the next 3 weeks the kids would sleep till about 3pm and fuck all night long till 5am? Smoking, Drinking & Fucking. Playing loud ass Korn music. Laughing. Having one hell of a time. I didn’t get any sleep. I was a zombie by the 3rd day. I would have given my life to Jesus for a few hours of Z’s. By this time mom had got wind of situation. She was riding my ass big time about helping Jim with the kids. She was really worried. I was working the 8am to 5pm shift. 7 or 8 times a night I would go up to their room and ask them to cool out but they just blew me off. About the 2nd week I said fuck it, “Jim you got to take these kids”? He freaks out and begs me to keep them but I point out that if we didn’t get rid of her Gabe was going to marry her shit. “I don’t know how to get rid of her Jim? You need to pull a Shepard before Gabe is nailed” I told him. The realization of Danielle as a daughter in law was like an Islamic call to pray. Jimbo's attitude changed immensely. Especially, went she told me that she had been fucking Gabe’s best friend and thought that the baby wasn’t Gabe’s? I could see Jimbo’s hair turn white! Oh the joys of parenthood I thought! Mr. Watson the game was under foot!

Jim moves both of them into his place. Kind of reminded me of some Chinese family, you know, were there are 143 people sharing a rice bowl in a 1 bedroom apartment? It took about a month of Gabe not finding a dishwasher's job before he realized that maybe marrying her was not greatest intellectual achievement known to mankind? Especially when he found out the baby isn't his? I bet images of diapers and rug rats puking on his precious Korn CD flash before Gabe's eyes. Jim was on pins & needles during this whole experience. When Gabe finally put her ass on a bus for Nashville-Whoopie! Jim & I went out to Larry's bar to celebrate! We were the Happiest Shits in cowtown that night! Gabe soon moved on. He had pieced his tong, die and Mohawk his hair, and was hanging out at this Goth club getting more pussy than god! About this time I began to get reports that Rudy's wife might be cheating. Rudy's marriage was over only he didn't know yet. Rudy would constantly complain about her at our recording sessions. I knew he was hurting but there was nothing I could do. Unfortunately, he was relentless in promoting his case. I saw many a musician gasps in horror as Rudy's spun his sad tale of woe. Actually, I did a great disservice to Rudy by not telling him to "shut the fuck up"! Jim on the other hand was trying to figure out how to handle Gabe? No small tasks because Gabe was running wild through the jungles of modern culture. Jim was highly perplexed. We talked for days & days about a "Gabe strategy". Finally, we agreed that a bigger place would keep Tarzan out of the trees. Thus began Jimbo's long and drawn out cash drain.

The Papparatt sessions had come to an end & Jim had moved into a duplex. For the time being Gabe seemed to be under control. Jim was dating and life was good. Then suddenly, I would get these reports of Jim getting into fights because of his drinking. I myself had been a heavy drink but I was beginning to pull back. I didn't say any thing to him but I was worried. I learned over the years to let Jim tell me what he wanted me to know. He tried to cut the drinking out a number of times. Then my mother died unexpectedly and I was truly shattered. Jim had always been close to my mother. He knew she was nutty but it didn't matter to him. It was a body slams pure & simple. Jim was not happy about it for it reminded him of his lost mother.

I was in shocked so Charles & Jim tried to get me back into the recording studio to help me cope with the pain. Jim had a house warming party and it looked as if he had got Gabe to slow down a bit. Around this time Jim started hanging out with Kane Naylor who was a record collector like Jim. They did a few gigs together and Jim brought Kane over to meet me. Jim had tried of campus bars by this time. His reputation was shot due to a fight at Larry's bar when being very drunk some dude hit him in the head with a pool cue. This wasn't the first time he got his ass kick for being drunk in a bar. I too was subject to this kind behavior. I began to pull away from the booze coz I too was having black outs. On one occasion Jim kept me from getting my ass kick when I tossed a chain at this dude's car. The guy would have killed me if it were not for Jim talking him down.

Mom's death had led to bad behavior for both of us. At this point we both hated life and felt there was nothing worth living for. All we saw was pain. It seemed like one bad event after another; it took many years of therapy for me to overcome my depression. Jim would tell me over & over that he didn't know how much more he could take. Yet, we supported & comfort each other from the negativity as best we could.

Jim & Charles had met Rick Klaus Theis and wanted to do a recording session with me. We started Lorca's Grave at the end of May and were done with the project by Nov 1997. I got to know Kane Naylor during this time. Of course Jim & I jockey for control of the project but in the end Klaus called the shots. It wouldn't be until June of 1998 that the record came out. It would be the last time Jim, Rudy & I would play together. Around this time Jim showed up missing a few teeth. Later I learned that Gabe had been fronted some pot, which he promptly smoked up. When it came time to pay up Gabe didn't have the doe! So some dudes show up and are ready to beat Gabe's head in. As it turned out Jim ended up loosing a few teeth trying to help his son out of a jam. In the end it add to Jim's sense of hopelessness.

Jim wanted to put out a new recorded called "Pimping In The 90's". To do this he offered Rudy and me a $1000 dollars a piece for our permissions. We settled for $200 each up front and the $800 each once the record was sold out by thrilljockey. In November of 1997

Klaus, Rudy & I decided that Studio 110 ought to do some shows. We began to work twice a week to get ready for a show at the Hi-5. Jim was off doing gigs with “Hard Black Thing” a project of his and Kane Naylor. More & more Jim was pulling away from V-3. He no longer accepted V-3. He wanted to start over from scratch as Jim Shepard. But he was running low on steam. In May of 1998 Gabe, Jim & I recorded some songs at my place. Both of us were really depressed over Kevin & mom. Most of the work has never been released.

August of 1997 saw Charles, Gabe & Jim became roommates. At first things was cool but then slowly friction began to develop. I was amazed that they were all getting along so well? I had lived with Charles & Jim so I had some sort on notion how things would turn out. Then the shit explodes and Charles was asked to leave. He loved Charles but he just couldn’t deal with any of the issues, which seem to center around Jim condoning Gabe's lack of responsibility. It was the beginning of the end for Jim. He had withdrawn completely from being involved with oversight of Gabe. He would lock his room off and give Gabe lots of cash & the run of the house. I would come over and the housework was in a very discussing state. There were teenagers milling about all day long with nothing to do. I would bitch to Jim about the housekeeping but he was just in too much emotional pain to care. He was exhausted from all the negativity generated by his life.

Folks had been impressed by Jim's record deal. Back then it was rare for a Columbus band to be signed to a major. He was a shining light and everyone wanted a piece of it. Around February of 1998 Jim began to reach out to Marci Leonard who was working on her masters degree in photography at OSU. The seedy life style was once again calling out to him. Jim was always attracted to the glamour of the dark side. He was enamored with her bohemia life style and the fact that Marcy was a heroin junkie. For a while Jim found peace with someone who had the same artistic perspective as him. She had a nice personality and for a time Jim was happy. But soon the money began to burn up very fast. Marci would bum $200 a pop for heroin then disappears for days.

Jim always took up for the underdog. He took in strays a lot. But, his friendships & the world around him were changing. Many of

Jim's peers, in the public's eye, were coming into their own. Jim was now being challenged. This began to bother him. He had always been the main one in control? Now others no longer depended on him. He started to withdraw keeping himself in his room and try to avoid all the troubled relationships surrounding him. Jim would say over & over, “Squid I don’t know how much more I can take”?

On better days Jim would brag to me about how good things were. But Jim was in denial about everything at that point, nor did he want others to know. While on the one hand he encouraged others with music, on the other hand he avoided the truth that he was burned out. He came to the point where he just didn't care any more. There was nothing left to do. He had taken it as far as he could. Everything else from this point onward was just aping his early work? Jim had signed a major record contract and saw to conundrum of it all. He saw the games, the bullshit, and the egos and was fed up. There was nothing left but pain and old age. Fuck that!

Jim went out of his way to keep others out of his head. Most of the time neither one of us knew what to do next? We would talk and Jim did try to mentor others but he hid his pain & disappointments about the choices he had made. Everybody else had his or her own social worlds and support systems but not Jim Shepard. But Jim kept trying. Then one day during one of our sessions Jim just exploded! Wow! I was shock by his overwhelming outburst of anger & rage? He was stilled pissed off about a bevy of things. Little did either of us know how much we were in need of therapy? But it wasn’t in the cards back. The reaper was waiting. I told him just forget the pass. "Fuck it, it's over with man. Things will be ok. You can see your kids anytime you want dude". Jim told me that he was never married and that he signed a paper saying that he was the father of the kids so as to pay through the courts. Which, in the end turned out to be the biggest joke of all. The courts would lose his payments then bitch at Jim for not paying. But we make our own choices for good or bad and they are the judge & jury.

In august of 1998 a worn out Jim Shepard ask me if he could move in with me and let Gabe take over his place. Little did I know that Jim, emotionally, was on his last legs? I failed to see the warning

signs. I was shocked but I told him no. I was so selfish and didn't want to share my space. Looking back it was the second biggest mistaken of my life. He had reached out for the last time. Jim kept asking me what he should do about Marci Leonard's heroin habit. I told him he either had to become a junkie or dump her. “Squid, I Just don’t know how much more I can take”. “You’ll be ok. Hang in there mate” I would often tell him. I had a gig lined up for September. The 1st Studio 110 show was out at Teddy Lust’s farm and saw Jim & Marci staying the night under the stars crashing in his car. Tommy Jay, Mike Rep, Klaus, Rudy, Charles, Tim, Freight Train, Jerry and his band "**Bluehound**" all jam that day. By this time there was dark weariness in Jim’s expression. He looked as if he was dying to me? I knew he was suffering but I didn’t know how to help him. His red face would swell & blacken overnight. I would always try to make a joke when he got like this to take his mind off it. But the lifetime of pain & booze was pulling him down into Hell.

I don’t know why I started to bug him about putting a "discography" together but he told me, “**Squid, if anyone cares about my art they’ll find it is scattered. If they really want to know then they must solve the puzzle”.** At the time I thought Jim was stupid but looking back I see the wisdom of it. It was Jim's way, so he thought, of saying goodbye to a world that didn’t give a rat’s about him or his work. A few weeks later I was talking with Jim and I look him dead in the eyes, for some strange reason I hug him and told him how much I love and appreciated him in my life. I told him how sorry I was for being a jerk & not supporting him over the years. **“I’m a reptile. I got the thick skin. It just rolls off my back. Don’t worry about it Squid”** He said. It was the 2nd time he let me inside. Foghat had pass between us. It was a major breakthrough for Jim and I think might have it cost him his life. By letting me in he gave up his last defense. Sadly, a few weeks later, with no way to defend him emotionally, Jim Shepard would be dead.

Studio 110 did another show few weeks later at the Hi-5 in Columbus. Jim & Marci came and we all had some big fun that night. The next day Jim drilled my sister & me about our mother’s funeral & estate arrangements. We told Jim all about the problems with not having a will. Jim never let on what he was thinking and I don’t think he really understood the way the "Ohio Law" works? Jim had given me a copy of his new CD “motorcycle movie”. He

wanted to know what I thought? I told him I gave it a B+. He was truly hurt by this. Looking back I see were it was really an A+ effort but at the time I didn't want to give him the upper hand. Jim told me he was "**passing blood in his pee**", shrugged, and said he wasn't worried about it. He also was going to break up with Marci. I was right. He either had to become addicted or break up with her. The darkness no longer fascinated him. He was done with it. I sensed that something was wrong so I tease him about his growing bald spot by offering him my bottle of Rogaine. I tried to make him laugh. If I had only know how fragile he was. Jim did not defend himself and I wondered what was wrong? But he put on a brave face so I blew it off. The Sunday before he died, there was a poster of Arlus Stitch in my studio and during our last recording session with Jim he walked over and kissed the poster. Rudy, Klaus & I watched him do it. It so was weird? At the time I didn't think too much about it, but it was Jim's way of performing the last rites. He was writing his epitaph in this last act. He had done what he had come to earth to do. In his own way he was saying good-bye to all us. He was Christ with his disciples at the Last Supper. We just didn't know it at the time. That was the last time I saw the old sod alive. From here on out I would fight this battle alone. Alone I would get to see the Internet sun set on the major record label control of the market. I was proud of our roles. We had not got sucked up into the Fame & Riches trip too badly. We were real artists, not some manufactured product of mass consumption. We did music for love not money. From disco to the Internet we held true to our dream.

It had been a ruff week at work and this wage slave was looking forward to partying that Friday night. My job was oppressive but the money was good. I was going to call Jimbo and ask him if he wanted to go out on a raid? Maybe even get laid-who knows? When I got home Kane had left a cold dark message on my machine. At first I thought it was a joke? I played the message over about 4 times. ***"Hey squid, it's Kane...Jim is Dead. I am over at the house with Gabe. You had better come".*** POW! I went numb & cold and stay that way for 6 months. It was like being crushed by a mountain. As I arrived at Jim's house Gabe was half-naked crying his poor bloodshot eyes out. I watch is horror as the cops entered the house. This was just another routine call for them. They wouldn't let us go in. I needed to touch Jim. I don't know why? 7

days later I would. Kane Naylor walked up red eyed with tears streaming down his cheeks and explained that Gabe had found the body and cut Jim down from the door. Jim left a note and $1,500 bucks on the desk for Gabe. Jim had waited till Gabe was asleep before he acted. I stood in shock as they roll the body pass me. **"Goodbye"** I whispered to Jim as they put him in the truck. It was the lowest point in my existence. I had never really understood how close we were till his death. Just 4 hours early Jim was alive? Now I was on the "other side of darkness".

All around me were people staring, asking questions? Why? Again, like so many times before we had been thrust out in to the public eye. Jim was feeding the public pure philosophy now. Everyone was being forced to question his or her own purpose in being a live? They were forced into judging Jim. Soon they would have the unpleasant task of judging themselves. Everyone was at the boundaries of love. Could love embrace this evil deed? This question ripped & tore at their minds. Everyone was forced to make a value judgement as the universe gently watched. This act was the signpost of truth. If they work at it then enlightenment & understanding would come to them also. I was asked millions of times why he did this? I was in shock and on autopilot with my response. How could they understand Jim's karma? How could they walk in Jim's shoes? None of them could. How could they understand the cost Jim had to pay for his art? Jim chose to make his own suffering meaningful & creative for a larger purpose. Is not the pain of one human being equal to the sorrow of all humanity? Jim through his art wanted people to think about things. This dark angle of light by reason of his pain chose to open the door of wisdom. How would the world choose to understand this act? Death comes to everyone sooner or later. All humans must at the point of death give recognition to the truth that greater beings than oneself have passed this way. Wisdom knows that life & death is an illusion, as is good & evil. The truly lucky understand this. Jim in ignorance had transformed his being from pain to joy. Only our thoughts & deeds can truly judge us, for it is the gift of free will as administer by nature, which is the real law. All life is only ignorance in motion at some level. He who is without sin let him cast the first stone.

Jim had set it up so Roxanne would get Jim's final suffering & distraught, but highly logically words in the mail a few weeks later. It was only then that we began to understand the meaning of Jim's life. After the body had been taken I went into the room. His tomb was neat & clean but the rest of the house was a complete mess. The record on his turntable was "Into The Sun" by Sean Lennon which Jim really loved. His cat was crying.

I had talked with Roxanne for the first time in 5 years that day. She was really hurting. Like the rest of us she was forced to pick up the burden of suffering that Jim could no long bear. "Why Squid"? I went to see Mike Rep at Used Kids and told him what had happen. Mike had to drink from this cup of uncertainty too. "Why Squid"? We decided that we wanted to inspect the place to make sure that Jim wasn't murder? Everyone was in shock and ask me, "Why Squid"? Finally, Gabe gave me the rope that Jim used to hang himself.

As I left the Jim's home the sun's light shined on me in a way that it had never ever done before. It was spiritual yet painfully surrealistic. Jim like Christ on the cross-had passed his flames of agony on to his friends and family. Very weird things began to happen to me when I had got home that night. Jim and I had made a pack long ago that who ever dies first would try to get a message through to the other one that there is indeed life after death. Around 10PM that night my phone rang and the weirdest music or noise started playing? It lasted for about 2 minuets then the phone went dead. Was it Jim's way of saying he made it ok? Soon, phone calls came in.... I was getting calls from all over the world. People wanted something from me which I couldn't give, "Why Squid?" How could I explain the mystery of life and death to them? All I could do was share their sorrows.

Jim & I had come full circle. We had done what we set out to do. The years that followed his death were a hellish. I had to battle suicide too. But I was very, very lucky. I got help. I was able to let go of my pain. How many artists can make that claim? But at the time the sorrow was just beginning. Friends & family began to fight with each other about Jim legacy. Each claimed that theirs was the closer relationship. Everyone claimed to know Jim wishes? Everyone had his or her own takes on Jim's head. Some thought

him a loving friend others a con man. Some called him a great poet; others called Jim a jerk? Man, all I could do was ride out the storms of healing and avoid the Doppler effect. Yet, the fact remains that everyone had been linked up by Jim's death. No one saw it coming. So maybe none of us really knew what Jim thought? We thought we did but maybe we really didn't know shit? All I knew was that I had lost my leader, my brother, and my teacher. With his death I discovered the true meaning of friendship. It never really ends, but grows stronger with each passing reincarnation. I am sure Jim will be there for all of his friends & family when our time comes to pass over. Jim was destine to kill himself. If not for Jim's death I wound not have grown into the person I am. I like me now. I understand me. I am very happy how. My take on this was that Jim needed to do it or future reincarnations; so as to become a master of wisdom. No two paths are the same. Likewise, no two moments in time. Each of us is unique & special. Each of us must follow our own path. Each of us must grow & evolve. We all should try to seek our divinity. We should all try to let go of our opinions & judgements of what is right and what is wrong. To celebrate a life is much better that to condemn it? In the mean time, maybe we can stop trying to create each other in our own image; maybe we can just have some more fun as friends. Who Knows? Maybe we can even help others along the way? One thing is for sure; I'm gonna rock till I drop because it sure beats the hell out of boredom? How about you? Nudge Squidfish 2002